

GENERATION Y AS ORGAN DONOR: INFORMATIONAL AND SUPPORTIVE INFLUENCE OF SOCIALIZATION AGENTS ON ATTITUDE TOWARDS ORGAN DONATION

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Abstract

Organ donation is a health issue which involves a process of an individual freely giving consent to donate organs or tissue for very ill or dying recipients. In Malaysia, the notion of organ donation has been facilitated by many government authorities since 1970s. However, recent statistics show that the number of patients requiring donated organs far outnumbers the donors. The unwillingness to donate is commonly associated with spiritual beliefs, myths, misunderstanding, lack of knowledge and lack of trust. Most of the studies conducted in Malaysia highlighted the reasons impeding Malaysians to become donors rather than looking at the aspect of communication that influences the attitude of the potential organ donor. Thus, this study is designed to focus on the values and norms which are commonly transmitted by the socialization agents that consist of parents, peers, educational institution, traditional mass media and new media, which are presumed to have significant effects on behaviour development of the potential donor towards organ donation. Particularly, this research attempted to examine the influence of these socialization agents on Generation Y's attitude formation towards organ donation. Generation Y was selected based on the conclusion made by previous scholars that this group of individuals is at the stage of discovering themselves on how to fit into society and the social world, where they mostly consume ideas from their socialization agents to achieve their life goals. The study employed quantitative method using survey questionnaire. Individuals were chosen based on non-probability sampling and the age range was between 18-24 years old. The socialization agents were measured in terms of informational and supportive influence. The findings of this study indicated that the supportive influence from all the agents of socialization affected the attitude of Generation Y and parents appeared as the most influential agent. However, their attitude was negatively correlated with the intention to sign up as an organ donor. The implications for social marketers were also discussed.

1. INTRODUCTION

Organ donation is a medical procedure which involves a process of an individual freely giving consent to donate organs or tissue for very ill or dying living recipients (Transplant Unit, 2015). In Malaysia, organ donation is facilitated by the Human Tissue Act (1974) and the National Transplantation Program (1975). It is propelled by The National Transplant Resource Centre with the support and cooperation of Ministry of Health and Medical Development.

The relevant authorities in Malaysia have been taking many initiatives to keep the public aware and informed and subsequently register as an organ donor. However, the number of donors in Malaysia is still low. According to the National Organ Donation Public Awareness Action Committee, since 1976 until early 2014, only 446 organ donors (deceased) have been registered in the country and up to December last year, only 243,000 Malaysians has pledged to donate their organs. The World Health Organization also noted that Malaysia's organ donation was only 0.8% of the total population (whole population approximately 30 million), which was among the lowest in the world.

Horton & Horton (1990) found that misconceptions are one of the possible barriers to gain consent from potential organ donors. The misconceptions about the surgical procedure and concerns about the mutilation of the body are among the important factors that develop fear for donating organ (Kopfman, Smith, Yun & Hodges, 1998). In spite of that, some studies in Malaysia indicated that the Malaysian society at large is not keen in organ donation due to reasons such as spiritual beliefs, cultural differences, myths, low level of awareness and lack of knowledge (Loch, Hilmi, Mazam, Pillay & Choon, 2010; Wong, 2010). Organ donation programs generally do not offer any tangible benefit (Lwin, Williams & Lan, 2002) to the donors unless they can associate it with quality of life and making something positive out of death (Mostafa, 2010).

Very few studies such as Wong (2010) are done in Malaysia focusing on the communication practices which can help increase organ donation. Most of the researches are focusing on finding the reasons of reluctance and not on examining possible areas of persuasive communication programs. In spite of the multiple efforts undertaken in Malaysia and globally, there is still little increase as to the number of registered donors as well as those who pledge to become an organ donor.

This paper is an attempt to address the problems regarding the insufficiency of donors by looking precisely into the construct of influence from the socialization agents such as parents, peers, school and mass media onto Generation Y's attitude and behaviour towards organ donation. Most members of Generation Y rely on information and guidance from socialization agents to achieve their goals. Hence, within the Malaysian context, the objective of this paper is to investigate two issues: (1) the relationship between the informational influence from each agent on Generation Y's attitude and behaviour towards the act of donating organ and (2) the relationship between the supportive influence from each agent on Generation Y's attitude and behaviour towards organ donation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study focuses on the concept of consumer socialization by Moschis and Churchill (1978) which referred to the people and groups that influence an individual's self-concept, emotion, attitude and behavior. This is the process by which young people develop skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviour relevant to their role in the society. Grusec (2002, cited in Arnett, 2006) added that socialization explains how individuals are assisted to acquire skills necessary to function as members of their social group. Although this concept is majorly used with regards to marketing activities of products and services, research shows that this notion can be transferred to specific areas to understand the patterns of thinking and behaving towards public issues and social causes. For example, Fletcher, Glen and Mekos (2000) found that parental reinforcement was significant in promoting youth participation in community-based activities. The key concept of socialization is the influence of agents on any individuals. We contend that the informative and supportive influence of socialization agents are the indicators of Generation Y's attitude towards organ donation. In understanding attitude towards organ donation, all socialization agents are assessed based on the Theory of Reasoned Action as proposed by Ajzen & Fishbein (1975).

2.1 Theory of Reasoned Action

Theorists agreed that attitudes explain human behaviours and determine a person's actual and potential behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975). This approach suggested that an individual's intention is shaped by attitude and subjective norm. The main insight of this study referred to an individual's beliefs on whether the significant others think that he or she should engage in a given behaviour. Explanations of significant others explicitly narrate the functions of the socialization agents in the life of an individual. These are the people whose opinions are considered important to the individual. This theory is renowned and has been widely referenced to by investigations pertaining to attitudes, subjective norms, intention and behaviour (Sutton, 1998). It has also been tested previously by Weber, Martin and Corrigan (2007) with regards to organ donation.

2.2 Socialization Agents

The term "socialization" refers to the process of teaching naïve individuals the skills, behaviors, values and motivations needed for them to function effectively in a social setting (Maccoby, 2006). Many agents are involved in this life-learning process, namely parents, peers, educators and mass media. The agents serve as teachers and the young individuals as learners. As this concept is deemed to present new directions and opportunities in understanding attitudes and behaviours, it is gaining attention in the academic literature.

Choi and La Ferle (2004) argued that the greater the interaction with a socialization agent, the more the source to be considered important for gaining information. Since substantial communication can exist between Generation Y and the socialization agents, the key issue here is to extend the amount of influence into a more comprehensive one by taking into consideration the informational influence and supportive influence of the agents that are decisive to the respondent's perception.

We define parental influence as parent-child interaction which stresses on family values and the need of conforming to social norms (Wiman, 1983). Parents play a strategic role in positively influencing attitude and behaviour of their children. Ramaseshan, Wong and Turner (2011) emphasized that family values are positively associated with willingness to donate organ. Parents may convey values through discussion and encouragement. Family opinions are one of the factors in determining community attitudes (Irving, Jan, Tong, Wong, Craig, Chadban, Rose, Cass, Allen & Howard, 2014). From one generation to the other, parents are changing and altering the actions of the children (Sameroff, 1975, cited in Grusec & Davidov, 2006). Parents influence their children directly through discussions and the power of parents may be the most powerful tool available to help children's journey through life (Moore, Raymond, Mittelstaedt & Tanner, 2002; Pinto, Parente & Mansfield, 2005, cited in Pinto & Mansfield, 2011). According to Mascarenhas and Higby (1993), parental information exceeds all other socialization agents.

Peers are influencing self-concept and pro-social behaviors (Bukowski, Brendgen & Vitaro, 2006). For example, peers have been found to be preferred when decisions primarily relate to the issues of social acceptance (Moore & Bowman, 2006). As an individual gets older, the peer group becomes the primary source of social values, replacing the influence of parents. In the process of achieving personal autonomy, young individuals turn to peers for stimulation (Blos, 1967, cited in Bukowski, Brendgen & Vitaro, 2006) and they can influence each other in positive traits (Kindermann, 1993, cited in Lee, 2011). Due to the fact that they share the common experience, the informational and supportive influence could be considered as one of the dominant factors in assimilating social values.

Past studies have also given considerable attention to influence from educational institutions and educators. In Wentzel's (1991) study of social relationships, she identified that educational institutions and educators have been promoting social behaviour in the forms of moral character and conformity to social norms and values. Schools provide youth with skills, attitudes and cognitive bases which are designed to foster critical thinking and self-confidence (Shim, 1996). Subsequently, McNeal (2007, cited in Pinto & Mansfield, 2011) believes that schools help transform children into consumers by providing them with information about consumption-related activities. In relation to public affairs, adolescents who are exposed to organ donation information by their school curriculum are seen to be more open-minded about it. In addition, Trenholm and Rose (1981) documented that teachers communicate social values and expectations to their students. Higher level educators focus on the development of pro-social behaviour and encourage prosocial interactions (Sieber, 1979, cited in Wentzel & Looney, 2006). Social values and prosocial interactions can be developed through informational and supportive influence.

This is the era where media is the key socialization agents for Generation Y. Media has been understood as an important tool to communicate accurate and reliable information for the public to make informed decisions on organ donation (Rady, McGregor & Verheijde, 2012). According to Dubow, Huesmann and Greenwood (2006), today's youths are exposed to media-saturated environment which serves as reference for social norms. The informational and supportive influence of traditional mass media comes

mainly from programming and advertising. For instance, the news coverage emphasized stories of children saved by organ transplants and the drama series such as CSI, NCIS and Bones have portrayed the issue of organ donation which affects viewers' attitude towards organ donation (Harrison, Morgan & Chewning, 2008). In this context, the greater the mass media influence on daily life, the more suggestive is its information in terms of providing credible evidence along with serving as reference for social norms (Myers, 2008, cited in Uzniene, 2010; Mascarenhas & Higby, 1993; McQuail, 1987, cited in Lee, 2011).

In addition, La Ferle, Edwards and Lee (2000) referred Internet as an attractive source of information as it is interactive and easily accessible to simultaneously act as a new social agent. The diversity of new media and the increasing usage by Generation Y makes it a potentially solid agent of socialization which can enhance an individual's learning process (McQuail, 2010). Repeated exposure to online media may enable Generation Y to receive information and support pertaining to various social issues including organ donation. Particularly, social media has been transforming passive individuals into active producers who care share knowledge and opinions (Nov, Naaman & Ye, 2010; Cho, Chen & Chung, 2010). Increased connectivity enable Generation Y to experience a social space far more diverse than their family, peers and school (Chilton, 2000; Barber, 2013).

Based on all these, our assertions constructed in the context of informational and supportive influence of agents on Generation Y's attitude towards organ donation and given the preceding discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1a: Parental informative influence has a significant effect on Generation Y's attitude towards organ donation.
- H1b: Parental supportive influence has a significant effect on Generation Y's attitude towards organ donation.
- H2a: Peer informative influence has a significant effect on Generation Y's attitude towards organ donation.
- H2b: Peer supportive influence has a significant effect on Generation Y's attitude towards organ donation.
- H3a: The informative influence from educational institutions and educators has a significant effect on Generation Y's attitude towards organ donation.
- H3b: The supportive influence from educational institutions and educators has a significant effect on Generation Y's attitude towards organ donation.
- H4a: The informative influence from traditional mass media has a significant effect on Generation Y's attitude towards organ donation.
- H4a: The supportive influence from traditional mass media has a significant effect on Generation Y's attitude towards organ donation.
- H5a: The informative influence from new media has a significant effect on Generation Y's attitude towards organ donation.
- H5b: The supportive influence from new media has a significant effect on Generation Y's attitude towards organ donation.
- H6: Attitude towards organ donation has a significant effect on the intention to donate organ.

3. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Quantitative research was used to analyze the relationship between the informational and supportive influence from each agent on Generation Y's attitude and behaviour towards the act of donating organ. The amount of information and level of support from each agent served as the foundation for the research.

3.1 Online Survey Research

The study used self-administered questionnaires which were distributed to the targeted respondents via online survey. The target population for this research was Generation Y in Malaysia. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia, the current estimated population of Generation Y in Malaysia is 9,757,980 million. The age range of Generation Y is between 18 to 34 years old (those who are born in between the year of 1980 and 1996). The present study focuses on individuals aged between 18-24 years old.

The questionnaire was pilot-tested on 50 respondents to test the consistency and stability of the items measuring the concept of the study. The reliabilities, measured with Cronbach's alpha, ranged from .453 to .950. The accepted Cronbach value for this study is above .5 which was based on the study conducted by Moschis & Churchill (1978) on consumer socialization. As such, the item scored less than .5 was eliminated from the attitude scale to produce an acceptable reliability.

The remaining 39 items were factor-analysed for validity. For the peer influence scale, one item on the supportive influence fall on a separate component and following the recommendations by Kothari & Garg (2014), the said item was dropped in order to classify variables accordingly. Hence, seven primary factors emerged explaining 69% of the variance. The factor loadings ranged from .593 to .880. As a result, 38 item questions were retained with 162 usable questionnaires.

3.2 Description of the Sample

Out of the 162 respondents, 62 (38.3%) were male and 100 (61.7%) were female. The Chinese constituted the largest ethnic group, accounting for 51.9% of the respondents, followed by Malays (25.9%), Indians (18.5%) and others (3.7%). In terms of age, the majority group is 20 years old (39.5%) with mean of 21.17 and standard deviation of 1.64. This usable sample consisted of 12 respondents (7.4%) who have completed secondary school, 91 respondents (56.2%) completed Diploma and 59 respondents (36.4%) at the Degree level.

3.3 Measures

All constructs in the study involved multiple items and they are measured using a 5-point Likert Scale. The data of this study were analyzed using SPSS program. Multiple regression was used to explore the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables. Table 1 summarizes the sources used to operationalize the model constructs.

Table 1: Measurements of variables and sources

Construct	Variable	Item Questions	Sources
Parental influence	Informational influence	1. My parents discuss about organ donation with me. 2. My parents give me detailed information about organ donation. 3. My parents share updated information on organ donation with me.	Moschis & Churchill (1978), Soh, Charlton & Chew (2014)
	Supportive influence	1. My parents support organ donation. 2. My parents give me advice about organ donation. 3. My parents encourage me to sign up as an organ donor.	Lacanche & Legault (2007), Soh, Charlton & Chew (2014)
Peer influence	Informational influence	1. My friends discuss about organ donation with me. 2. My friends give me detailed information about organ donation. 3. My friends share updated information on organ donation with me.	Moschis & Churchill (1978), Soh, Charlton & Chew (2014)
	Supportive influence	1. My friends support organ donation. 2. My friends give me advice about organ donation.	Lacanche & Legault (2007), Barber (2013), Soh, Charlton & Chew (2014)
Influence of Education	Informational influence	1. My educational institution provides me useful information about organ donation. 2. My educational institution distributes materials about organ donation. 3. My teachers/lecturers talk about organ donation to me. 4. My teacher/lecturer communicates the values of organ donation.	Moschis & Churchill (1978), Kamaruddin & Mokhlis (2003), Lacanche & Legault (2007)
	Supportive influence	1. My educational institution supports organ donation. 2. My educational institution encourages me to sign up as an organ donor. 3. My teacher/lecturer supports organ donation. 4. My teacher/lecturer encourages me to sign up as an organ donor.	Moschis & Churchill (1978)
Influence of traditional media	Informational influence	1. I always get information about organ donation from mass media. 2. I consider the mass media a good source of organ donation information. 3. I read, hear and watch stories of people who need organs.	Wong (2010), Barber (2013)
	Supportive influence	1. The mass media shows testimonials from the family members of the deceased organ donors and organ recipients. 2. There is good advice about organ donation on mass media. 3. The mass media provides me with convenient options for becoming an organ donor.	Wong (2010), Barber (2013)
Influence of new media	Informational influence	1. I pay attention to organ donation information on the Internet. 2. I consider the Internet a good source of organ donation information. 3. I read and watch stories of people who need organs.	Wong (2010), Barber (2013)
	Supportive influence	1. The Internet shows testimonials from the family members of the deceased organ donors and organ recipients. 2. There is good advice about organ donation on the Internet. 3. The Internet provides me with convenient options for becoming an organ donor.	Wong (2010), Barber (2013)
Attitude towards organ donation		1. I believe in the importance of organ donation. 2. I believe that organ donation is morally justified. 3. I view organ donation as a benefit to humanity. 4. Organ donation is against my religious beliefs. 5. I consider organ donation a frightening activity.	Marshall (2006), Mostafa (2010), Guden, Cetinkaya & Nacar (2013), McGlade & Pierscionek (2013)
Behaviour towards organ donation		1. Have you registered to be an organ donor? 2. If you have not, would you sign up in the next 6	Marshall (2006), McGlade & Pierscionek (2013)

	months?	
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4. RESULTS

4.1 Agents' Influence and Hypotheses Testing

4.1.1 Parental Influence

There was no significant relationship between informational influence from parents and attitude towards organ donation. It was negatively associated with the items *My parents discuss about organ donation with me* ($p = .375$; $r = .070$); *My parents give me detailed information about organ donation* ($p = .523$; $r = .051$) and *My parents share updated information about organ donation* ($p = .367$; $r = .071$). H1a, which states that the parental informative influence has a significant effect on Generation Y's attitude, was not supported. On the other hand, there was a significant positive relationship between supportive influence of parents and attitude towards the act donating organ ($p = .000$; $r = .329$). The item *My parents support organ donation* was positively associated with mean attitude ($p = .000$; $r = .412$) and item *My parents encourage me to sign up as an organ donor* ($p = .000$; $r = .368$). These findings suggest that parents are encouraging their children to become an organ donor but there is no sufficient information given to them. This is in line with studies by Wang, Zhang & Wang (2008) and Ramaseshan, Wong & Turner (2011) who found that Generation Y's parents are supportive of organ donation. Therefore, H1b which tested for parental influence effects on Generation Y's attitude was supported.

4.1.2 Peer Influence

Interestingly, the opposite result was found with peers. It was associated negatively for informational influence ($p = .912$; $r = -.009$). Therefore, H2a is not supported. However, supportive influence from peers showed positive correlation ($p = .030$; $r = .170$). Thus, results of the test showed that H2a garnered support. In other words, Generation Y who are supporting organ donation seems to be encouraging their peers to become an organ donor too although sufficient information is not being exchanged.

4.1.3 The Influence of Educational Institutions and Educators

Similar to peer influence, the informational influence of education ($p = .054$; $r = .152$) was statistically insignificant but the supportive influence ($p = .004$; $r = .224$) showed positive relationship. These results rejected H3a and supported H3b. It can be concluded that educational institutions and educators are supporting Generation Y towards organ donation.

4.1.4 The Influence of Traditional Mass Media

The correlation between the informational influence and Generation Y's attitude was statistically significant ($p = .004$; $r = .225$) and this suggests that Generation Y are getting sufficient information from the traditional mass media. Therefore, the hypotheses (H4a) regarding the informative influence of traditional mass media were supported. Additionally, the correlation between the supportive influence of mass media and Generation Y's attitude was also significant ($p = .007$; $r = .210$) and hence the data provided support for H4b. These data suggested that although the strength of the

relationship for both informational influence and supportive influence are little but the mass media is considered an influential socialization agent for Generation Y.

4.1.5 *The Influence of New Media*

Similarly, the two correlations for the influence of new media were significant ($p = .002$; $r = .241$ for informational influence; and $p = .004$; $r = .224$ for supportive influence). Therefore, H5a and H5b were fully accepted. As hypothesized, the statistical results with new media functioning as a predictor variable indicated that new media is a *good source of organ donation information* ($p = .000$; $r = .281$) and it *provides good advice about organ donation* ($p = .003$; $r = .230$). This finding suggests that new media is an influential socialization agent in the formation of Generation Y's attitude towards organ donation.

4.1.6 *Relationship between Attitude and Behaviour*

The test for correlation was done for attitude with current behaviour and intention to sign up as an organ donor. The analysis demonstrated that attitude is significantly important for current donors ($p = .042$; $r = -.160$). Anyhow, the r value of $-.160$ shows negative relationship between attitude and the current donor behaviour which means although they have negative attitude towards organ donation, they still sign up as an organ donor. Furthermore, the results also indicated that there is significant relationship between attitude and intention to sign up as an organ donor ($p = .000$; $r = -.283$). Based on the r value ($-.283$), the strength of the relationship showed that these two variables were having low relationship and a negative r value indicated a negative relationship between the two variables which means as the attitude increases, the intention to sign up decreases. This explains the intention of more than 50% of the respondents who are not willing to sign up as an organ donor although they have shown more positive attitude towards organ donation. Therefore, H6 is supported with negative correlation between attitude and behaviour. Attitude is considered significant in predicting behaviour but as indicated by this study, the negative attitude explains Generation Y's intention of not signing the donation card.

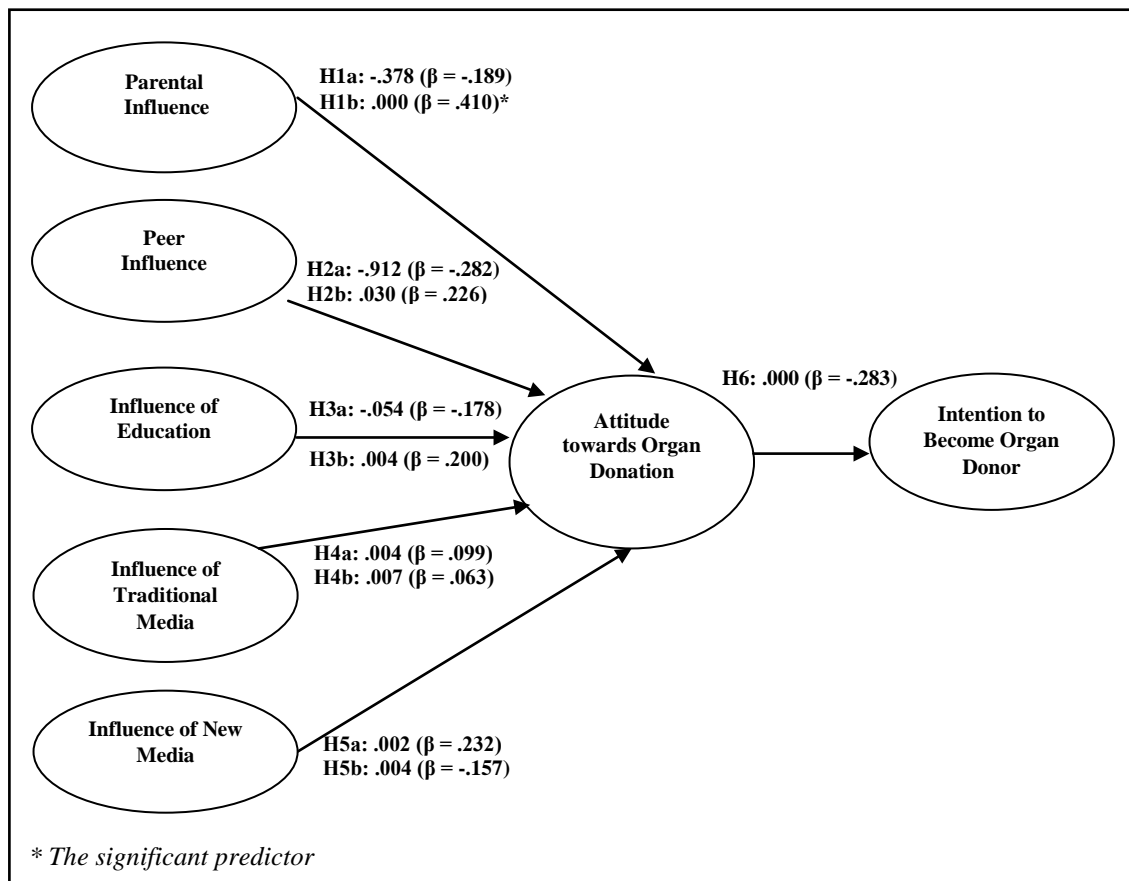
4.1.7 *Regression Analysis*

Parental supportive influence emerged as the main predictor ($\beta = .410$; $p = .000$) of Generation Y's attitude towards organ donation with significant relationship. The other predictors for the attitude of Generation Y were peer supportive influence, new media informational influence, education supportive influence and both influence from traditional mass media. The beta value shows that the greater the amount of influence from these agents, the better the Generation Y's attitude towards organ donation. However, all these agents were not the significant predictors for attitude. Alternatively, the coefficient for parental informative influence, peer informative influence, educational informative influence and new media supportive influence showed negative relationship, which indicated the greater the influence they received, the poorer their attitude towards organ donation. These results are noteworthy for the discussion later.

Next, current behaviour refers to the number of donors registered at the material time of this research. Donors are more likely to be influenced by information given by the mass media ($\beta = .226$; $p = .084$), peers ($\beta = .179$; $p = .174$) and education ($\beta = .144$; $p = .420$) but none of the predictors shown significant correlation. The positive direction of

coefficient indicated that the greater the information received from the mass media, peers and education, the better their behaviour towards organ donation. The supportive influence from new media ($\beta = .065$; $p = .690$) was also a predictor for the current donors but not having significant relationship. On the other hand, the remaining variables showed negative coefficients suggesting that the low level of influence received from these agents does not inspire the Generation Y to be an organ donor. The final theoretical framework with the coefficient paths is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The final theoretical framework



5. DISCUSSION

This research is rooted from the challenges arising in the field of organ donation and the possible marketing solutions for Generation Y. This research further focused on the informational and supportive influence of the socialization agents on Generation Y's attitude and behaviour towards organ donation indicated that most Generation Y has a negative attitude towards organ donation. Consistent with previous researches (Makmor, Abdillah, Raja Noriza, Nurulhuda, Soo-Kun & Kok-Peng, 2014; Radecki & Jaccard, 1997, cited in Sirois et al., 2005, Riyanti et al., 2014), Generation Y does not trust the process of organ donation and due to the insufficiency of information, they may create a perception that organ donation is a terrifying activity which is dangerous to

their life. As mentioned earlier, fear could be a major reason for not pledging. All these suggests that information and material directed at Generation Y should be redeveloped.

The findings suggested that among all the socialization agents examined in this study, parents had the most effect on the attitude of Generation Y with regards to organ donation. This finding is consistent with past research on Generation Y and the role of parents in influencing their children's attitude (Mascarenhas & Higby, 1993; Sirois et al., 2005; Eccles, 2006; Wang, Zhang & Wang, 2008). The impact of parents appears to be strong in terms of supportive influence but then again the strength of their support has lesser effects on Generation Y's attitude. It appeared that parents are not considering much about getting their children to pledge as an organ donor. They may not perceive organ donation as a highly important issue. The study also revealed that the informative influence from parents is not significant at all. It should be noted that parental influence is associated with less information of organ donation. This finding suggested that parents of Generation Y are not getting sufficient information about organ donation and because of that, they could not communicate it to their children. Another possibility is parents are not paying attention to organ donation information and thus they are not equipped with sufficient knowledge to share them with their children. This is unfavourable for the relevant authority.

Peer influence is associated with an erosion of attitude towards organ donation. As opposed to the literature, there appeared to be a case here where the Generation Y is getting little support from their peers on becoming a donor. Peer informational influence was totally not significant with their attitude and this may reflect Generation Y's status as a generation who is unknown of their surrounding's phenomenon and they do not share information on social causes. In addition, there is a general assumption that the young generation has less concern on health issues, hence there is no impact on their awareness and action towards organ donation. Unlike parents, peers are considered not favourable in shaping potential donors. It is important and necessary to change their mindsets about organ donation.

It appeared that educational institutions and educators had mixed results. Institutions and educators appeared to influence only in terms of supportive and are associated negatively in terms of information sent to Generation Y. Similar to peer influence, the support given by the institutions and educators are associated with positive attitude of Generation Y. Information influence from these entities had no significant effects on Generation Y. This suggests that, educational institutions and educators can serve as important mechanism to support and enhance the notion of organ donation and inform the members of Generation Y about the values and facts of organ donation in a way that peers may be unable to do so.

The results of this study supported the previous research done by Pinto & Mansfield (2011) that attitude is influenced by the exposure of the media. It showed that both informative and supportive influence by the traditional mass media improve the attitude of Generation Y. These desirable effects of traditional mass media appear to increase the likelihood that this is one of the best sources to transmit the information and messages about organ donation directed at Generation Y. Communication conveyed through the mass media may improve the knowledge and attitude of Generation Y.

It is interesting to note that the influence of new media is found to be in the same direction as the traditional mass media. For both informational and supportive influence, it is observed that the influence of new media is greater and having a stronger effect on the formation of Generation Y's attitude towards organ donation. Consistent with the literature and the findings on time spent, the degree to which Generation Y is influenced by the new media appears to be significantly higher. This is likely to occur because among Generation Y, the new media is available to them everywhere and they are exposed to it all the time. Consequently, the influence of new media is relatively powerful in developing the attitude of Generation Y.

6. IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH

This study found that the members of Generation Y care about organ donation as a majority of them agreed on the importance of organ donation. Thus, the tools of IMC that promote a slogan, an image or an emotional feeling about the value of organ donation will likely be noticed. Particularly, the communication should not be directed at fear but to focus on the charitable feelings of the donor and his/her family coupled with the benefits that the organ receiver will get with the appreciative values shown by the family members. As attitude determines behaviour, the authority needs to consider how to create appropriate communication programs that appeal to the Generation Y by emphasizing features such as "one sight, one sound, one concept" (as proposed by Schultz & Shultz, 2004) being spanned across various channels to change their attitude. This concept ensures that the communication remains consistent and achieves maximum clarity.

Since parental influence is the most powerful agent facilitating Generation Y's attitude, social marketers should encourage the parents of Generation Y to frequently share organ donation information with their children so that Generation Y will be equipped with sufficient knowledge. A charitable feeling should be cultivated at the point of communication. Another way to stimulate active involvement of parents who are currently not supportive of organ donation is to use affective or emotional appeals in their promotional messages. Both positive and negative appeals can be used as it has been proven effective when it comes to health issues. Parents should be educated first about the low rate of organ donation and the consequences faced by the awaiting patients. Subsequently, they would be able to transmit the message effectively to fit their child's needs.

The education on organ donation should continue to be used to provide information for members of the Generation Y in order for them to make knowledgeable decisions as well as clarifying the misconceptions about organ donation. Efforts at ministerial level can be done to insert the ideas of organ donation in any part of the curriculum and co-curriculum in order to maximise students' awareness and understanding. Social marketers should consider lobbying through the mass media, specifically the key editors, to include more programs and materials that motivate organ donation as well as creating Public Service Announcement (PSA) on organ donation. In addition, social marketers should undertake a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of new media

contents regarding organ donation. They should create a promotional plan that can establish the feelings of being appreciated for their effort to sign up as an organ donor.

As a limitation, this study assessed only a sub-cohort of Generation Y within the age group of 18-24 years old whereas as mentioned earlier, Generation Y consists of individuals within the age group of 18-34 years old. Second, it has not been determined whether the influence from the agents is permanent. Third, this study did not address the methods of socialization, which is how respondents were influenced in terms of information and support. The fourth limitation of this study is several variables were not measured but they could contribute to a richer understanding of our findings. The fifth limitation is that this study adopted a quantitative approach. Although the quantitative approach allows the examination of the relationship between variables, it is considered weak when attempting to discover the essential reasons to explain the phenomenon.

Future research should continue to look at how to maximise the positive communication of organ donation through creative messages while minimising its negative impact on the younger generation. Further study is required to determine the type of IMC tools needed to effectively motivate Generation Y to sign up as an organ donor. In order to make this research more effective in the future, it is suggested that the other cohorts of Generation Y should be tested. As Generation Y's age group spans from 18 to 34 years old, it would be interesting to see how the influences may change their attitude and behaviour as they get older (Shim, 1996). Although the results of this study supported previous findings, future studies could include hypotheses and analysis to measure the relationship between demographic variables and the influence of socialization agents.

7. CONCLUSION

In summary, the findings of this study have contributed to the understanding of the informational and supportive influence of socialization agents. The connection between socialization agents, attitude and behaviour reinforces the importance of this study as it provides direction for social marketers to develop integrated marketing communication strategies focusing on encouragement and inspiration. Current events and programs need to be fine-tuned in order to improve organ donation knowledge and positive perceptions.

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